

THE BLACK MAN CERTAINLY HAS TO PAY DEAR FOR CARRYING THE WHITE man's burden.

—GEORGE PADMORE
(West Indian) Pan-Africanist, 1936

In the colonial society, education is such that it serves the colonialist. . . . In a regime of slavery, education was but one institution for forming slaves.

—Statement of FRELIMO (Mozambique Liberation Front)
Department of Education and Culture, 1968

The Supposed Benefits of Colonialism to Africa

Socio-Economic Services

Faced with the evidence of European exploitation of Africa, many bourgeois writers would concede at least partially that colonialism was a system which functioned well in the interests of the metropolises. However, they would then urge that another issue to be resolved is how much Europeans did for Africans, and that it is necessary to draw up a balance sheet of colonialism. On that balance sheet, they place both the credits and the debits, and quite often conclude that the good outweighed the bad. That particular conclusion can quite easily be challenged, but attention should also be drawn to the fact that the process of reasoning is itself misleading. The reasoning has some sentimental persuasiveness. It appeals to the common sentiment that "after all there must be two sides to a thing." The argument suggests that, on the one hand, there was exploitation and oppression, but, on the other hand, colonial governments did much for the benefit of Africans and they developed Africa. It is our contention that this is completely false. Colonialism had only one hand—it was a one-armed bandit.

What did colonial governments do in the interest of Africans? Supposedly, they built railroads, schools, hospitals, and the like. The sum total of these services was amazingly small.

For the first three decades of colonialism, hardly anything was done that could remotely be termed a service to the African people. It was in fact only after the last war that social services were built as a matter of policy. How little they amounted to does not really need illustrating. After all, the

statistics which show that Africa today is underdeveloped are the statistics representing the state of affairs at the end of colonialism. For that matter, the figures at the end of the first decade of African independence in spheres such as health, housing, and education are often several times higher than the figures inherited by the newly independent governments. It would be an act of the most brazen fraud to weigh the paltry social amenities provided during the colonial epoch against the exploitation, and to arrive at the conclusion that the good outweighed the bad.

Capitalism did bring social services to European workers—firstly, as a by-product of providing such services for the bourgeoisie and the middle class, and later as a deliberate act of policy. Nothing remotely comparable occurred in Africa. In 1934, long before the coming of the welfare state to Britain, expenditure for social services in the British Isles amounted to 6 pounds 15 shillings per person. In Ghana, the figure was 7 shillings 4 pence per person, and that was high by colonial standards. In Nigeria and Nyasaland, it was less than 1 shilling 9 pence per head. None of the other colonizing powers were doing any better, and some much worse.

The Portuguese stand out because they boasted the most and did the least. Portugal boasted that Angola, Guinea, and Mozambique have been their possessions for five hundred years, during which time a “civilizing mission” has been going on. At the end of five hundred years of shouldering the white man’s burden of civilizing “African natives,” the Portuguese had not managed to train a single African doctor in Mozambique, and the life expectancy in eastern Angola was less than thirty years. As for Guinea-Bissau, some insight into the situation there is provided by the admission of the Portuguese themselves that Guinea-Bissau was more neglected than Angola and Mozambique!

Furthermore, the limited social services within Africa during colonial times were distributed in a manner that reflected the pattern of domination and exploitation. First of all, white settlers and expatriates wanted the standards of the bourgeoisie or professional classes of the metropolises. They were all the more determined to have luxuries in Africa, because so many of them came from poverty in Europe and could not expect good services in their own homelands. In colonies like Algeria, Kenya, and South Africa, it is well known that whites created an infrastructure to afford themselves leisured and enjoyable lives. It means, therefore, that the total amenities provided in any of those colonies is no guide to what Africans got out of colonialism.

In Algeria, the figure for infant mortality was 39 per 1,000 live births among white settlers; but it jumped to 170 per 1,000 live births in the case of Algerians living in the towns. In practical terms, that meant that

the medical, maternity, and sanitation services were all geared towards the well-being of the settlers. Similarly, in South Africa, all social statistics have to be broken down into at least two groups—white and black—if they are to be interpreted correctly. In British East Africa there were three groups: firstly, the Europeans, who got the most; then, the Indians, who took most of what was left; and thirdly, the Africans, who came last in their own country.

In predominantly black countries, it was also true that the bulk of the social services went to whites. The southern part of Nigeria was one of the colonial areas that was supposed to have received the most from a benevolent mother country. Ibadan, one of the most heavily populated cities in Africa, had only about 50 Europeans before the last war. For those chosen few, the British colonial government maintained a segregated hospital service of 11 beds in well-furnished surroundings. There were 34 beds for the half-million blacks. The situation was repeated in other areas, so that altogether the 4,000 Europeans in the country in the 1930s had 12 modern hospitals, while the African population of at least 40 million had 52 hospitals.

The viciousness of the colonial system with respect to the provision of social services was most dramatically brought out in the case of economic activities which made huge profits, and notably in the mining industry. Mining takes serious toll of the health of workers, and it was only recently in the metropolises that miners have had access to the kind of medical and insurance services which could safeguard their lives and health. In colonial Africa, the exploitation of miners was entirely without responsibility. In 1930, scurvy and other epidemics broke out in the Lupa goldfields of Tanganyika. Hundreds of workers died. One should not wonder that they had no facilities which would have saved some lives, because in the first place they were not being paid enough to eat properly.

South Africa’s large working class African population was in a sad state. The Tuberculosis Commission of 1912 reported that in the shanty towns,

Scarcely a single family exists in which at least one member is not suffering or dying from tuberculosis. Hospital services are so inadequate that incurable tuberculosis and other cases are simply sent home to die—and spread the infection. In some areas, a single doctor has to attend to the needs of 40,000 people. The natives must pay for medical treatment. There is no provision for pauper patients. About 65% of the native children die before reaching two years.

That was as early as 1912, when the basis of the South African gold and diamond empire was already laid. After this, the shanty towns in-

creased, the slum conditions grew worse, and the government committed itself to pursuing the odious policy of apartheid, which meant separation of the races so as better to exploit the African people.

Many Africans trekked to towns, because (bad as they were) they offered a little more than the countryside. Modern sanitation, electricity, piped water, paved roads, medical services, and schools were as foreign at the end of the colonial period as they were in the beginning—as far as most of rural Africa was concerned. Yet, it was the countryside that grew the cash crops and provided the labor that kept the system going. The peasants there knew very little of the supposed “credits” on the colonial balance sheet.

Because even the scanty social services were meant only to facilitate exploitation, they were not given to any Africans whose labor was not directly producing surplus for export to the metropolises. That is to say, none of the wealth of exploited Africans could be deployed for the assistance of their brothers outside the money economy.

Multiple examples exist to substantiate the above proposition. The most “wealthy” colonies received greater social services under colonialism. Thus, The Rand in South Africa and Katanga in Congo had to provide for their relatively large working class. For many years, they approached the whole matter indifferently, but in the final analysis, enlightened self-interest made the colonialists realize that more could be gained out of the African worker who maintained basic health and who had some degree of literacy in industrial contexts. This was the same line of reasoning which had previously led the capitalist class in Europe to be somewhat freer in allowing part of the workers’ production to go back to keeping the worker alive and well.

In the cash-crop producing countries of Africa, a similar situation existed whereby the tendency was for socio-economic services to decrease in colonies or areas which produced few goods to be shipped abroad. That accounts for the fact that Africans in Gold Coast, Uganda, and Nigeria could be considered as having been “better off” than those in Dahomey, Tanganyika, and Chad.

Within individual countries, considerable regional variations existed, depending on the degree to which different parts of a country were integrated into the capitalist money economy. Thus, the northern part of Kenya or the south of Sudan had little to offer the colonialists, and such a zone was simply ignored by the colonizing power with regard to roads, schools, hospitals, and so on. Often, at the level of the district of a given colony, there would be discrimination in providing social amenities, on the basis of contribution to exportable surplus. For instance, plantations and

companies might build hospitals for their workers, because some minimum maintenance of the workers’ health was an economic investment. Usually, such a hospital was exclusively for workers of that particular capitalist concern, and those Africans living in the vicinity under subsistence conditions outside the money economy were ignored altogether.

The Arusha Declaration powerfully and simply expressed one of the deepest truths of the colonial experience in Africa when it stated: “We have been oppressed a great deal, we have been exploited a great deal, and we have been disregarded a great deal.”

The combination of being oppressed, being exploited, and being disregarded is best illustrated by the pattern of the economic infrastructure of African colonies: notably, their roads and railways. These had a clear geographical distribution according to the extent to which particular regions needed to be opened up to import-export activities. Where exports were not available, roads and railways had no place. The only slight exception is that certain roads and railways were built to move troops and make conquest and oppression easier.

Means of communication were not constructed in the colonial period so that Africans could visit their friends. More important still, they were not laid down to facilitate internal trade in African commodities. There were no roads connecting different colonies and different parts of the same colony in a manner that made sense with regard to Africa’s needs and development. All roads and railways led down to the sea. They were built to extract gold or manganese or coffee or cotton. They were built to make business possible for the timber companies, trading companies, and agricultural concession firms, and for white settlers. Any catering to African interests was purely coincidental. Yet in Africa, labor, rather than capital, took the lion’s share in getting things done. With the minimum investment of capital, the colonial powers could mobilize thousands upon thousands of workers. Salaries were paid to the police officers and officials, and labor came into existence because of the colonial laws, the threat of force, and the use of force. Take, for instance, the building of railways. In Europe and America, railway building required huge inputs of capital. Great wage bills were incurred during construction, and added bonus payments were made to workers to get the job done as quickly as possible. In most parts of Africa, the Europeans who wanted to see a railroad built offered lashes as the ordinary wage and more lashes for extra effort.

Reference was earlier made to the great cost in African life of the (French) Congo railroad from Brazzaville to Pointe-Noire. Most of the intolerable conditions are explained by the non-availability of capital in the form of equipment. Therefore, sheer manpower had to take the place

of earth-moving machinery, cranes, and so on. A comparable situation was provided by the construction of the Embakasi airport of Nairobi. Because it was built during the colonial era (starting in 1953) and with United States loans, it is customary to credit the imperialists for its existence. But it would be much more accurate to say that the people of Kenya built it with their own hands under European supervision.

Embakasi, which initially covered seven square miles and had four runways, was described as "the world's first handmade international airport." Mau Mau suspects numbering several thousand were to be found there "laboring under armed guard at a million-ton excavation job, filling in craters, laying a half million tons of stone with nothing but shovels, stone hammers and their bare hands."

The financial institutions of colonial Africa were even more scandalously neglectful of indigenous African interests than was the case with the European-oriented communications system. The banks did very little lending locally. In British East Africa, credit to Africans was specifically discouraged by the Credit to Natives (Restriction) Ordinance of 1931. Insurance companies catered almost exclusively to the interests of white settlers and capitalist firms. The policy of colonial reserves in metropolitan currencies can also be cited as a "service" inimical to Africans. The Currency Boards and central banks which performed such services denied Africa access to its own funds created by exports. Instead, *the colonial reserves in Britain, France, and Belgium represented African loans to and capital investment in Europe.*

It is necessary to re-evaluate the much glorified notion of "European capital" as having been invested in colonial Africa and Asia. The money available for investment in the capitalist system was itself the consequence of the previous robbery of workers and peasants in Europe and the world at large. In Africa's case, the capital that was invested in nineteenth-century commerce was part of the capital that had been derived from the trade in slaves. The Portuguese government was the first in Europe to ship captives from Africa and the last to let go of slave trading. Much of the profit slipped out of Portuguese hands, and went instead to Britain and Germany; but the Portuguese slave trade nevertheless helped the Portuguese themselves to finance later colonial ventures, such as joint capitalist participation in agricultural and mining companies in Angola and Mozambique.

As indicated earlier, many of the entrepreneurs from the big European port towns who turned to importing African agricultural produce into Europe were formerly carrying on the trade in slaves. The same can be said of many New England firms in the United States. Some of the biggest

"names" in the colonial epoch were capitalist concerns whose original capital came from the trade in slaves or from slavery itself. Lloyds, the great insurance underwriting and banking house, falls into this category, having been nourished by profits from the slave territories of the West Indies in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; and the ubiquitous Barclays Bank had its antecedents in slave trading. Worms et Compagnie is a French example of the same phenomenon. Back in the eighteenth century, Worms had strong links with the French slave trade, and it grew to become one of the most powerful financial houses dealing with the French empire in Africa and Asia, with particular concentration on Madagascar and the Indian Ocean.

The example of Unilever and the UAC which was highlighted in the previous chapter also reinforces the point that Africa was being exploited by capital produced out of African labor. When Lever Brothers took over the Niger Company in 1929, they became heirs to one of the most notorious exploiters of nineteenth-century Africa. The Niger Company was a chartered company with full governmental and police powers during the years 1885 to 1897. In that period, the company exploited Nigerians ruthlessly. Furthermore, the Niger Company was itself a monopoly that had bought up smaller firms tracing their capital directly to slave trading. Similarly, when the UAC was born out of the merger with the Eastern and African Trading Company, it was associated with some more capital that grew from a family tree rooted in the European slave trade. The capital at the disposal of the big French trading firms CFAO and SCOA can also be traced in the same way.

The process of capital accumulation and reproduction in East Africa lacks the continuity of West Africa. Firstly, Arabs as well as Europeans were participants in the slave trade from East Africa. Secondly, the Germans intervened in 1885, although they had not been previously involved; while the French (who had led the European slave trade in East Africa during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries) concentrated on colonizing the Indian Ocean islands rather than the East African mainland. Thirdly, German colonialism did not last beyond the 1914-18 war. Even so, on the British side, the capital and profits of the colonizing East Africa Company reappeared in the trading firm of Smith Mackenzie.

The capital that was invested in colonial Africa in later years was a continuation of the nineteenth century, along with new influxes from the metropolises. If one inquired closely into the origins of the supposedly new sources, quite a few would have been connected very closely to previous exploitation of non-European peoples. However, it is not necessary to prove that every firm trading in Africa had a firsthand or secondhand con-

nection with the European slave trade and with earlier exploitation of the continent. It is enough to remember that Europe's greatest source of primary capital accumulation was overseas, and that the profits from African ventures continually outran the capital invested in the colonies.

A conservative bourgeois writer on colonial Africa made the following remarks about the South African gold and diamond industries:

Apart from the original capital subscribed [in the diamond industry], all capital expenditure was provided for out of profits. The industry also yielded large profits to the international firms which dealt in diamonds. These had a peculiar importance, because a considerable portion of the wealth accumulated by diamond firms was later used in the development of the [gold industry] of the Rand.

Similarly, in Angola the *Diamang* diamond company was an investment that quickly paid for itself, and was then producing capital. The combined profits of that company for the years 1954 and 1955 alone came to the total of invested capital plus 40 per cent. The excess over investment and maintenance costs was of course expatriated to Portugal, Belgium, and the U.S.A., where the shareholders of *Diamang* were resident; and Angola was thereby investing in those countries.

In this sense, the colonies were the generators of the capital rather than the countries into which foreign capital was plowed.

Capital was constantly in motion from metropole to some part of the dependencies, from colonies to other colonies (via the metropolises), from one metropole to another, and from colony to metropole. But because of the superprofits created by non-European peoples ever since slavery, the net flow was from colony to metropole. What was called "profits" in one year came back as "capital" the next. Even progressive writers have created a wrong impression by speaking about capital "exports" from Europe to Africa and about the role of "foreign" capital. What was foreign about the capital in colonial Africa was its ownership and not its initial source.

Apologists for colonialism are quick to say that the money for schools, hospitals, and such services in Africa was provided by the British, French, or Belgian taxpayer, as the case may have been. It defies logic to admit that profits from a given colony in a given year totaled several million dollars and to affirm nevertheless that the few thousand dollars allocated to social services in that colony was the money of European taxpayers! The true situation can accurately be presented in the following terms: African workers and peasants produced for European capitalism goods and services of a certain value. A small proportion of the fruits of

their efforts was retained by them in the form of wages, cash payments, and extremely limited social services, such as were essential to the maintenance of colonialism. The rest went to the various beneficiaries of the colonial system.

There can be little dispute over the credibility of the data which are available to amply demonstrate that colonialism for the most part aimed at developing the metropolises, and only allowed certain crumbs to the colonies as incidental by-products of exploitation. British colonial records are full of reports of Royal Commissions investigating this and that; the reports (upon which action was seldom taken) provided the best evidence of the appalling indifference of the colonial regimes to the needs of Africans. In the 1930s, there were riots throughout the West Indies because of the insupportable suffering of the African descendants who were left stranded in those parts after slavery. The Royal Commission investigating the grievances found them so shocking that the full findings were not published during the war, lest they reveal that colonialism was hardly any better than the fascism against which Britain was fighting. It was out of that investigation that the idea of establishing Colonial Development and Welfare (CD&W) was advanced. An act to that effect was passed in 1940, although it was not until 1944 that funds became available for CD&W loans to colonial administrations.

The French also had their counterpart to CD&W in the form of FIDES, set up in 1946. From the earliest days of colonial expansion, there were two kinds of explanations of motives coming out of the metropolises. One was very frank, and appealed to the various Chambers of Commerce in European towns. It said simply that Europeans were in the colonial game because it was damned profitable, and that was that. However, there were other elements who thought it necessary to peddle a line about the welfare of the "uncivilized natives." This was a continuation of earlier justifications of slavery on the ground that it carried the heathen Africans to Christian lands. As colonialism came under heavy criticism during the last decades, more deliberate efforts were made to whitewash it. Both CD&W and FIDES were part of the public relations propaganda of colonialism, striving to mask and deny its viciousness.

Above all, both FIDES and CD&W were born of postwar conditions in Europe, at the time when Western European capitalist nations were desperately falling back on colonies to save them vis-à-vis socialism and even from the competition of the U.S.A. Mr. Bevin, a noted labor leader turned traitor to his class and spokesman for British capitalism, made the observation that "the other two world Powers, the United States and Soviet Russia, have tremendous resources. If Western Europe is to achieve its

balance of payments and to get a world equilibrium, it is essential that [African] resources should be developed, and made available." Any close study of the operations of CD&W and FIDES reveals clearly that they had nothing to do with African development but a great deal to do with the welfare of capitalist Europe.

The so-called development funds for Africa went almost exclusively into the building of economic infrastructures and into the provision of certain social services. Of the CD&W grants between 1946 and 1956, less than 1 per cent was allocated to industries. In the case of FIDES from 1949 to 1953, the corresponding figure was less than 0.5 per cent. Agriculture fared very little better, although that was of course the principal activity in which Africans were engaged. The colonial administration of Nigeria set up a Ten Year Plan, with hopes of borrowing heavily from CD&W funds. In that plan, the sum of 1.824 million pounds was voted for agriculture out of a total of 53 million pounds. Most of that agricultural grant was to be consumed by constructing an agricultural school and for providing salaries for British "experts."

Other British colonies drew up Ten Year Plans, which had the same deficiencies as the Nigerian one, and indeed they were all apologies for the true economic plans, being nothing else but a series of disjointed projects drawn up by different government departments as extensions to their then existing activities. Thus, the plans could not be expected to break any new ground; and they completely ignored developmental features such as stimulating internal and intra-African trade.

The high proportion of the "development" funds went into the colonies in the form of loans for ports, railways, electric power plants, water works, engineering workshops, warehouses, which were necessary for more efficient exploitation in the long run. In the short run, such construction works provided outlets for European steel, concrete, electrical machinery, and railroad rolling stock. One-fifth of FIDES funds were spent on prestigious public works in Dakar, which suited French industry and employed large numbers of expatriates. Even the schools built under FIDES funds were of unnecessary high cost per unit, because they had to be of the requisite standard to provide job outlets for white expatriates. Incidentally, loans were "tied" in such a way that the money had to be spent on buying materials manufactured in the relevant metropole.

The "development" funds were raised on the European money market by the governments concerned, and in effect the national metropolitan governments were providing their own bankers and financiers with guaranteed profitable outlets for their capital. In 1956, the French government started a scheme which was a blatant form of promoting their

own private capitalists while paying lip service to African development and welfare. The scheme involved the creation of an institution called SDOM (Financial Societies for the Development of Overseas Territories). SDOM was nothing but an association of private capitalists interested primarily in the oil of North Africa, and having large government subventions to achieve their goals.

There were many telltale signs which unmasked the CD&W hoax in the eyes of careful and concerned observers. The Colonial Secretary set up a council to help him in allocation of grants, and it was dominated by really powerful members of the British bourgeoisie, including directors of Barclays Bank. Since the CD&W funds were inadequate even for the hopeless Ten Year Plans of the colonies, the British government then encouraged the colonial administrations to borrow the rest of their finances on the open money market. That was another way of insuring that African labor and resources dispatched surplus to greedy European moneychangers.

Barclays Bank was one of the first to seize the opportunity of lending to colonial regimes to supplement the CD&W grants. That bank set up a special Overseas Development Corporation to "assist" Africa, the chairman of the bank assuring all that "the development of the colonial empire and the well-being of its inhabitants is a matter that concerns every citizen of [Britain]." That was the language of public relations, which fitted in very well with the sordid hypocrisy practiced by white men ever since they started killing and enslaving in the name of civilization and Christianity.

As part of the hypocrisy of colonialism, it became fashionable to speak of how Europe brought Africa into the twentieth century. This assertion has implications in the socio-economic and political spheres, and it can be shown to be false not in some but in all respects.

So often it is said that colonialism modernized Africa by introducing the dynamic features of capitalism, such as private property in land, private ownership of the other means of production, and money relations. Here it is essential to distinguish between *capitalist elements* and *capitalism as a total social system*. Colonialism introduced some elements of capitalism into Africa. In general terms, where communalism came into contact with the money economy, the latter imposed itself. Cash-crop farming and wage labor led away from the extended family as the basis of production and distribution.

One South African saying put forward that "the white man has no kin, his kin is money." That is a profound revelation of the difference between capitalist and pre-capitalist societies; and when capitalism came into contact with the still largely communal African societies, it introduced money relations at the expense of kinship ties. However, colonialism did not trans-

form Africa into a capitalist society comparable to the metropolises. Had it done that, one might have complained of the brutalities and inequalities of capitalism, but it could not then have been said that colonialism failed to advance Africa along the path of human historical development.

Capitalism as a system within the metropolises or epicenters had two dominant classes: firstly, the capitalists or bourgeoisie who owned the factories and banks (the major means for producing and distributing wealth); and secondly, the workers or proletariat who worked in the factories of the said bourgeoisie. Colonialism did not create a capital-owning and factory-owning class among Africans or even inside Africa; nor did it create an urbanized proletariat of any significance (particularly outside South Africa). In other words, capitalism in the form of colonialism failed to perform in Africa the tasks which it had performed in Europe in changing social relations and liberating the forces of production.

It is fairly obvious that capitalists do not set out to create other capitalists, who would be rivals. On the contrary, the tendency of capitalism in Europe from the very beginning was one of competition, elimination, and monopoly. Therefore, when the imperialist stage was reached, the metropolitan capitalists had no intention of allowing rivals to arise in the dependencies. However, in spite of what the metropolises wanted, some local capitalists did emerge in Asia and Latin America. Africa is a significant exception in the sense that, compared with other colonized peoples, far fewer Africans had access even to the middle rungs of the bourgeois ladder in terms of capital for investment.

Part of the explanation for the lack of African capitalists in Africa lies in the arrival of minority groups who had no local family ties which could stand in the way of the ruthless primary accumulation which capitalism requires. Lebanese, Syrian, Greek, and Indian businessmen rose from the ranks of petty traders to become minor and sometimes substantial capitalists. Names like Racciah and Leventis were well known in West Africa, just as names like Madhvani and Visram became well known as capitalists in East Africa.

There were clashes between the middlemen and the European colonialists, but the latter much preferred to encourage the minorities rather than see Africans build themselves up. For instance, in West Africa the businessmen from Sierra Leone were discouraged both in their own colony and in other British possessions where they chose to settle. In East Africa, there was hope among Ugandans in particular that they might acquire cotton gins and perform some capitalist functions connected with cotton growing and other activities. However, when in 1920 a Development Commission was appointed to promote commerce and industry, it favored firstly

Europeans and then Indians. Africans were prohibited by legislation from owning gins.

Taking Africa as a whole, the few African businessmen who were allowed to emerge were at the bottom of the ladder and cannot be considered as "capitalists" in the true sense. They did not own sufficient capital to invest in large-scale farming, trading, mining, or industry. They were dependent both on European-owned capital and on the local capital of minority groups.

That European capitalism should have failed to create African capitalists is perhaps not so striking as its inability to create a working class and to diffuse industrial skills throughout Africa. By its very nature, colonialism was prejudiced against the establishment of industries in Africa, outside of agriculture and the extractive spheres of mining and timber felling. Whenever internal forces seemed to push in the direction of African industrialization, they were deliberately blocked by the colonial governments acting on behalf of the metropolitan industrialists. Groundnut-oil mills were set up in Senegal in 1927 and began exports to France. They were soon placed under restrictions because of protests of oil-millers in France. Similarly in Nigeria, the oil mills set up by Lebanese were discouraged. The oil was still sent to Europe as a raw material for industry, but European industrialists did not then welcome even the simple stage of processing groundnuts into oil on African soil.

Many irrational contradictions arose throughout colonial Africa as a result of the non-industrialization policy: Sudanese and Ugandans grew cotton but imported manufactured cotton goods, Ivory Coast grew cocoa and imported tinned cocoa and chocolate.

The tiny working class of colonial Africa covered jobs such as agricultural labor and domestic service. Most of it was unskilled, in contrast to the accumulating skills of capitalism proper. When it came to projects requiring technical expertise, Europeans did the supervision—standing around in their helmets and white shorts. Of course, in 1885 Africans did not have the technical know-how which had evolved in Europe during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. That difference was itself partly due to the kind of relations between Africa and Europe in the pre-colonial period. What is more significant, however, is the incredibly small number of Africans who were able to acquire "modern" skills during the colonial period. In a few places, such as South Africa and the Rhodesias, this was due to specific racial discrimination in employment, so as to keep the best jobs for whites. Yet, even in the absence of whites, lack of skills among Africans was an integral part of the capitalist impact on the continent.

It has already been illustrated how the presence of industry in Europe

fostered and multiplied scientific techniques. The reverse side of the coin was presented in Africa: no industry meant no generation of skills. Even in the mining industry, it was arranged that the most valuable labor should be done outside Africa. It is sometimes forgotten that it is labor which adds value to commodities through the transformation of natural products. For instance, although gem diamonds have a value far above their practical usefulness, the value is not simply a question of their being rare. Work had to be done to locate the diamonds. That is the skilled task of a geologist, and the geologists were of course Europeans. Work had to be done to dig the diamonds out, which involves mainly physical labor. Only in that phase were Africans from South Africa, Namibia, Angola, Tanganyika, and Sierra Leone brought into the picture. Subsequently, work had to be done in cutting and polishing the diamonds. A small portion of this was performed by whites in South Africa, and most of it by whites in Brussels and London. It was on the desk of the skilled cutter that the rough diamond became a gem and soared in value. No Africans were allowed to come near that kind of technique in the colonial period.

Much of the dynamism of capitalism lay in the way that growth created more opportunities for further growth. Major industries had by-products, they stimulated local raw-material usage, they expanded transport and the building industry—as was seen in the case of Unilever. In the words of the professional economists, those were the beneficial “backward and forward linkages.” Given that the industries using African raw materials were located *outside* Africa, then there could be no beneficial backward and forward linkages *inside* Africa. After the Second World War, Guinea began to export bauxite. In the hands of French and American capitalists, the bauxite became aluminum. In the metropolises, it went into the making of refractory material, electrical conductors, cigarette foil, kitchen utensils, glass, jewel bearings, abrasives, light-weight structures, and aircraft. Guinean bauxite stimulated European shipping and North American hydro-electric power. In Guinea, the colonial bauxite mining left holes in the ground.

With regard to gold, the financial implications in Europe were enormous, and African gold played its part in the development of the monetary system and of industry and agriculture in the metropolises. But, like bauxite and other minerals, gold is an exhaustible resource. Once it is taken out of a country's soil, that is an absolute loss that cannot be replaced. That simple fact is often obscured so long as production continues, as in South Africa; but it is dramatically brought to attention when the minerals have actually disappeared during the colonial epoch. For instance, in the south of Tanganyika, the British mined gold as fast as they could from 1933

onwards at a place called Chunya. By 1953, they had gobbled it all up and exported it abroad. By the end of the colonial period, Chunya was one of the most backward spots in the whole of Tanganyika, which was itself known as the poor Cinderella of East Africa. If that was modernization, and given the price paid in exploitation and oppression, then Africans would have been better off in the bush.

Industrialization does not only mean factories. Agriculture itself has been industrialized in capitalist and socialist countries by the intensive application of scientific principles to irrigation, fertilizers, tools, crop selection, stock breeding. The most decisive failure of colonialism in Africa was its failure to change the technology of agricultural production. The most convincing evidence as to the superficiality of the talk about colonialism having “modernized” Africa is the fact that the vast majority of Africans went into colonialism with a hoe and came out with a hoe. Some capitalist plantations introduced agricultural machinery, and the odd tractor found its way into the hands of African farmers; but the hoe remained the overwhelmingly dominant agricultural implement. Capitalism could revolutionize agriculture in Europe, but it could not do the same for Africa.

In some districts, capitalism brought about technological backwardness in agriculture. On the reserves of Southern Africa, far too many Africans were crowded onto inadequate land, and were forced to engage in intensive farming, using techniques that were suitable only to shifting cultivation. In practice, that was a form of technical retrogression, because the land yielded less and less and became destroyed in the process. Wherever Africans were hampered in their use of their ancestral lands on a wide-ranging shifting basis, the same negative effect was to be found. Besides, some of the new cash crops like groundnuts and cotton were very demanding on the soil. In countries like Senegal, Niger, and Chad, which were already on the edge of the desert, the steady cultivation led to soil impoverishment and encroachment of the desert.

White racist notions are so deep-rooted within capitalist society that the failure of African agriculture to advance was put down to the inherent inferiority of the African. It would be much truer to say that it was due to the white intruders, although the basic explanation is to be found not in the personal ill-will of the colonialists or in their racial origin, but rather in the organized viciousness of the capitalist/colonialist system.

Failure to improve agricultural tools and methods on behalf of African peasants was not a matter of a bad decision by colonial policy-makers. It was an inescapable feature of colonialism as a whole, based on the understanding that the international division of labor aimed at skills in the metropolises and low-level manpower in the dependencies. It was also a

result of the considerable use of force (including taxation) in African labor relations. People can be forced to perform simple manual labor, but very little else. This was proven when Africans were used as slaves in the West Indies and America. Slaves damaged tools and carried out sabotage, which could only be controlled by extra supervision and by keeping tools and productive processes very elementary. Slave labor was unsuitable for carrying out industrial activity, so that in the U.S.A. the North went to war in 1861 to end slavery in the South, so as to spread true capitalist relations throughout the land. Following the same line of argument, it becomes clear why the various forms of forced agricultural labor in Africa had to be kept quite simple, and that in turn meant small earnings.

Capitalists under colonialism did not pay enough for an African to maintain himself and family. This can readily be realized by reflecting on the amounts of money earned by African peasants from cash crops. The sale of produce by an African cash-crop farmer rarely brought in 10 pounds per year and often it was less than half that amount. Out of that, a peasant had to pay for tools, seeds, and transport and he had to repay the loan to the middleman before he could call the remainder his own. Peasants producing coffee and cocoa and collecting palm produce tended to earn more than those dealing with cotton and groundnuts, but even the ordinary Akwapim cocoa farmer or Chagga coffee farmer never handled money in quantities sufficient to feed, clothe, and shelter his family. Instead, subsistence farming of yams or bananas continued as a supplement. That was how the peasant managed to eat, and the few shillings earned went to pay taxes and to buy the increasing number of things which could not be obtained without money in the middlemen's shops—salt, cloth, paraffin. If he was extremely lucky, he would have access to zinc sheets, bicycles, radios, and sewing machines, and would be able to pay school fees. It must be made quite clear that those in the last category were extremely few.

One reason why the African peasant got so little for his agricultural crops was that his labor was unskilled. That was not the whole explanation, but it is true that a product such as cotton jumped in value during the time it went through the sophisticated processes of manufacture in Europe. Karl Marx, in clarifying how capitalists appropriated part of the surplus of each worker, used the example of cotton. He explained that the value of the manufactured cotton included the value of the labor that went into growing the raw cotton, plus part of the value of the labor that made the spindles, plus the labor that went into the actual manufacture. From an African viewpoint, the first conclusion to be drawn is that the peasant working on African soil was being exploited by the industrialist who used

African raw material in Europe or America. Secondly, it is necessary to realize that the African contribution of unskilled labor was valued far less than the European contribution of skilled labor.

It has been observed that one hour of work of a cotton peasant in Chad was equivalent to less than one centimeter of cotton cloth, and he needed to work fifty days to earn what was needed to buy three meters of the cloth made from his own cotton in France. Yet, the French textile worker (using modern spindles) ran off three meters of cloth in a matter of minutes! Assuming that the Frenchman was not closer to God (who made the whole world in only six days and rested on the seventh), then there must be factors in the capitalist colonialist system which permitted the great disparity in the relative value of labor in Chad and France. In the first place, the Chad peasant was defrauded through trade so that he sold cheap and bought dear, and therefore received a minute proportion of the value that he created with his labor. This was possible not because of mysterious "market forces" as bourgeois economists would like us to believe, but because of political power being vested entirely in the hands of the colonialists. It was a consequence of monopolistic domination, both economically and politically. Secondly, the quantity of time spent by the Chad peasant was longer because colonialism did not permit him to acquire the tools to shorten the hours required to produce a given quantity of raw cotton.

To a certain extent, it would have been in the interests of the colonial powers to have had better agricultural techniques in Africa, leading to increased volume and quality of production. All colonial regimes sponsored some scientific research into tropical agriculture. However, the research was almost entirely devoted to cash crops, it was limited in scope, and it was more easily adaptable by plantations than by African peasants who had no capital. The pitiable amount devoted to agricultural improvement in Africa during the colonial period contrasts sharply with the increasingly huge sums that were devoted to research in Europe over the same period—with enormous benefits to both industry and agriculture in the metropolises.

Side by side with the ill-founded claims about socio-economic modernization went the claims by colonial apologists that European rule brought political uplift and emancipation. One of the long-standing arguments in this connection is that Africa was in chaos in the nineteenth century, and that "tribes" like the Ngoni and the Yao and Samori's *sofas* were killing left, right, and center. Consequently, Africa was saved by Livingstone and Stanley. For the most part, such wild statements have no place in the works of the present generation of European scholars of Africa, since they are known to have no resemblance to reality. However, some writers still

preach that "the Bantu could be saved from the wasting struggles and from their general economic and technical backwardness only by the imposition of stable [European] government."

Another supposed credit of the colonialists is that they developed nationalism in Africa. That is a superficial and mischievous claim, which entirely ignores the numerous states in Africa on the eve of colonization, and the direction of their evolution. Nationalism is a certain form of unity which grows out of historical experience. It is a sense of oneness that emerges from social groups trying to control their environment and to defend their gains against competing groups. The nation-state also imposes order and maintains stability within its own boundaries, usually on behalf of a given class. All of those characteristics were present in nineteenth-century African states, some of which were much larger than the colonies arbitrarily defined by Europeans.

It is true that the present African nationalism took the particular form of adopting the boundaries carved by the imperialists. That was an inevitable consequence of the fact that the struggle to regain African independence was conditioned by the administrative framework of the given colonies. But it would show crass ignorance of the African past to say that colonialism modernized Africa politically through nation-states, especially when the implication is that such a level of political organization and stability would otherwise have been impossible.

One colonialist proposition that has at least an air of plausibility is that capitalism and colonial rule meant greater individual freedom for many Africans. Young men earning wages or individuals farming for cash became independent of the corporate demands of their families. It is debatable to what extent that was a worthwhile phenomenon, but it could be said to be somewhat comparable to the way in which capitalism freed the individual in Europe from the restrictions of feudal society and from such bonds as those imposed by morally self-righteous people. Nevertheless, when any given African did break from what were proving to be onerous extended family obligations, what freedom did he acquire? His choice of alternatives was narrowly dictated by the colonialists, and he was only "free" to participate in the money economy and in the European-oriented cultural sector at the very lowest and uncreative levels.

There is a more sympathetic school of historians of Africa who contend that to see colonialism as completely negative is to underrate the *initiative* of Africans. Africans, they say, moved boldly into the labor market, into cash-crop farming, into commerce in some instances, into the educational field, and into the churches. Yet, those were simply *responses* (albeit vigorous ones) to the options laid open by the colonialists. True historical

initiative by a whole people or by individuals requires that they have the power to decide on the *direction* in which they want to move. That latter aspect had to await the decade of the 1960s.

Within any social system, the oppressed find some room to maneuver through their own initiative. For instance, under the slave regime of America and the West Indies, Africans found ways and means of gaining small advantages. They would flatter and "con" the slavemasters, who were so arrogant and bigoted that they were readily fooled. Similarly, under colonialism many Africans played the game to secure what they could. Africans in positions like interpreters, police, and court officials often had their way over the ruling Europeans. However, that should not be mistaken for power or political participation or the exercise of individual freedom. Under slavery, power lay in the hands of the slavemasters; under colonialism, power lay in the hands of the colonialists. The loss of power for the various African states meant a reduction in the freedom of every individual.

Colonialism was a negation of freedom from the viewpoint of the colonized. Even in quantitative terms it could not possibly bring modern political liberation to Africans comparable to the little that had been achieved by capitalism as an improvement of feudalism. In its political aspects, capitalism in the metropolises included constitutions, parliaments, freedom of the press. All of those things were limited in their application to the European working class, but they had existed in some form or fashion in the metropolises ever since the American War of Independence and the French Revolution. But Jules Ferry, a former French colonial minister, explained that the French Revolution was not fought on behalf of the blacks of Africa. Bourgeois liberty, equality, and fraternity was not for colonial subjects. Africans had to make do with bayonets, riot acts, and gunboats.

Negative Character of the Social, Political, and Economic Consequences

The argument so far has been aimed at showing that benefits from colonialism were small and they were not gifts from the colonialists, but rather fruits of African labor and resources for the most part. Indeed, what was called "the development of Africa" by the colonialists was a cynical shorthand expression for "the intensification of colonial exploitation in Africa to develop capitalist Europe." The analysis has gone beyond that to demonstrate that numerous false claims are made purporting to show that Europe developed Africa in the sense of bringing about social order, nationalism, and economic modernization. However, all of that would still not permit

the conclusion that colonialism had a negative impact on Africa's development. In offering the view that colonialism was negative, the aim is to draw attention to the way that previous African development was blunted, halted, and turned back. In place of that interruption and blockade, nothing of compensatory value was introduced.

The colonization of Africa lasted for just over seventy years in most parts of the continent. That is an extremely short period within the context of universal historical development. Yet, it was precisely in those years that in other parts of the world the rate of change was greater than ever before. As has been illustrated, capitalist countries revolutionized their technology to enter the nuclear age. Meanwhile, socialism was inaugurated, lifting semi-feudal semi-capitalist Russia to a level of sustained economic growth higher than that ever experienced in a capitalist country. Socialism did the same for China and North Korea—guaranteeing the well-being and independence of the state as well as reorganizing the internal social arrangements in a far more just manner than ever before. It is against those decisive changes that events in Africa have to be measured. To mark time or even to move slowly while others leap ahead is virtually equivalent to going backward. Certainly, in relative terms, Africa's position vis-à-vis its colonizers became more disadvantageous in the political, economic, and military spheres.

The decisiveness of the short period of colonialism and its negative consequences for Africa spring mainly from the fact that Africa lost power. Power is the ultimate determinant in human society, being basic to the relations within any group and between groups. It implies the ability to defend one's interests and if necessary to impose one's will by any means available. In relations between peoples, the question of power determines maneuverability in bargaining, the extent to which one people respect the interests of another, and eventually the extent to which a people survive as a physical and cultural entity. When one society finds itself forced to relinquish power entirely to another society, that in itself is a form of underdevelopment.

During the centuries of pre-colonial trade, some control over social, political, and economic life was retained in Africa, in spite of the disadvantageous commerce with Europeans. That little control over internal matters disappeared under colonialism. Colonialism went much further than trade. It meant a tendency towards direct appropriation by Europeans of the social institutions within Africa. Africans ceased to set indigenous cultural goals and standards, and lost full command of training young members of the society. Those were undoubtedly major steps backward.

The Tunisian, Albert Memmi, puts forward the following proposition:

The most serious blow suffered by the colonized is being removed from history and from the community. Colonization usurps any free role in either war or peace, every decision contributing to his destiny and that of the world, and all cultural and social responsibility.

Sweeping as that statement may initially appear, it is entirely true. The removal from history follows logically from the loss of power which colonialism represented. The power to act independently is the guarantee to participate actively and *consciously* in history. To be colonized is to be removed from history, except in the most passive sense. A striking illustration of the fact that colonial Africa was a passive object is seen in its attraction for white anthropologists, who came to study "primitive society." Colonialism determined that Africans were no more makers of history than were beetles—objects to be looked at under a microscope and examined for unusual features.

The negative impact of colonialism in political terms was quite dramatic. Overnight, African political states lost their power, independence, and meaning—irrespective of whether they were big empires or small polities. Certain traditional rulers were kept in office, and the formal structure of some kingdoms was partially retained, but the substance of political life was quite different. Political power had passed into the hands of foreign overlords. Of course, numerous African states in previous centuries had passed through the cycle of growth and decline. But colonial rule was different. So long as it lasted, not a single African state could flourish.

To be specific, it must be noted that colonialism crushed by force the surviving feudal states of North Africa; that the French wiped out the large Moslem states of the Western Sudan, as well as Dahomey and kingdoms in Madagascar; that the British eliminated Egypt, the Mahdist Sudan, Asante, Benin, the Yoruba kingdoms, Swaziland, Matabeleland, the Lozi, and the East African lake kingdoms as great states. It should further be noted that a multiplicity of smaller and growing states were removed from the face of Africa by the Belgians, Portuguese, British, French, Germans, Spaniards, and Italians. Finally, those that appeared to survive were nothing but puppet creations. For instance, the Sultan of Morocco retained nominal existence under colonial rule which started in 1912; and the same applied to the Bey of Tunis; but Morocco and Tunisia were just as much under the power of French colonial administrators as neighboring Algeria, where the feudal rulers were removed altogether.

Sometimes, the African rulers who were chosen to serve as agents of foreign colonial rule were quite obviously nothing but puppets. The French and the Portuguese were in the habit of choosing their own African "chiefs"; the British went to Iboland and invented "warrant chiefs"; and

all the colonial powers found it convenient to create "superior" or "paramount" rulers. Very often, the local population hated and despised such colonial stooges. There were traditional rulers such as the Sultan of Sokoto, the Kabaka of Buganda, and the Asantehene of Asante, who retained a great deal of prestige in the eyes of Africans, but they had no power to act outside the narrow boundaries laid down by colonialism, lest they find themselves in the Seychelles Islands as "guests of His Majesty's Government."

One can go so far as to say that colonial rule meant the effective eradication of African political power throughout the continent, since Liberia and Ethiopia could no longer function as independent states within the context of continent-wide colonialism. Liberia in particular had to bow before foreign political, economic, and military pressures in a way that no genuinely independent state could have accepted; and although Ethiopia held firm until 1936, most European capitalist nations were not inclined to treat Ethiopia as a sovereign state, primarily because it was African, and Africans were supposed to be colonial subjects.

The pattern of arrest of African political development has some features which can only be appreciated after careful scrutiny and the taking away of the blinkers which the colonizers put on the eyes of their subjects. An interesting case in point is that of women's role in society. Until today, capitalist society has failed to resolve the inequality between man and woman, which was entrenched in all modes of production prior to socialism. The colonialists in Africa occasionally paid lip service to women's education and emancipation, but objectively there was deterioration in the status of women owing to colonial rule.

A realistic assessment of the role of women in independent pre-colonial Africa shows two contrasting but combined tendencies. In the first place, women were exploited by men through polygamous arrangements designed to capture the labor power of women. As always, exploitation was accompanied by oppression; and there is evidence to the effect that women were sometimes treated like beasts of burden, as for instance in Moslem African societies. Nevertheless, there was a countertendency to insure the dignity of women to greater or lesser degree in all African societies. Mother-right was a prevalent feature of African societies, and particular women held a variety of privileges based on the fact that they were the keys to inheritance.

More important still, some women had real power in the political sense, exercised either through religion or directly within the politico-constitutional apparatus. In Mozambique, the widow of an Nguni king became the priestess in charge of the shrine set up in the burial place of her deceased

husband, and the reigning king had to consult her on all important matters. In a few instances, women were actually heads of state. Among the Lovedu of Transvaal, the key figure was the Rain-Queen, combining political and religious functions. The most frequently encountered role of importance played by women was that of "Queen Mother" or "Queen Sister." In practice, that post was filled by a female of royal blood, who might be mother, sister, or aunt of the reigning king in places such as Mali, Asante, and Buganda. Her influence was considerable, and there were occasions when the "Queen Mother" was the real power and the male king a mere puppet.

What happened to African women under colonialism is that the social, religious, constitutional, and political privileges and rights disappeared, while the economic exploitation continued and was often intensified. It was intensified because the division of labor according to sex was frequently disrupted. Traditionally, African men did the heavy labor of felling trees, clearing land, building houses, apart from conducting warfare and hunting. When they were required to leave their farms to seek employment, women remained behind burdened with every task necessary for the survival of themselves, the children, and even the men as far as foodstuffs were concerned. Moreover, since men entered the money sector more easily and in greater numbers than women, women's work became greatly inferior to that of men within the new value system of colonialism: men's work was "modern" and women's was "traditional" and "backward." Therefore, the deterioration in the status of African women was bound up with the consequent loss of the right to set indigenous standards of what work had merit and what did not.

One of the most important manifestations of historical arrest and stagnation in colonial Africa is that which commonly goes under the title of "tribalism." That term, in its common journalistic setting, is understood to mean that Africans have a basic loyalty to tribe rather than nation and that each tribe still *retains* a fundamental hostility towards its neighboring tribes. The examples favored by the capitalist press and bourgeois scholarship are those of Congo and Nigeria. Their accounts suggest that Europeans tried to make a nation out of the Congolese and Nigerian peoples, but they failed, because the various tribes had their age-long hatreds; and, as soon as the colonial power went, the natives *returned* to killing each other. To this phenomenon, Europeans often attach the word "atavism," to carry the notion that Africans were returning to their primitive savagery. Even a cursory survey of the African past shows that such assertions are the exact opposite of the truth.

It is necessary to discuss briefly what comprises a tribe—a term that has

been avoided in this analysis, partly because it usually carries derogatory connotations and partly because of its vagueness and the loose ways in which it is employed in the literature on Africa. Following the principle of family living, Africans were organized in groups which had common ancestors. Theoretically, the tribe was the largest group of people claiming descent from a common ancestor at some time in the remote past. Generally, such a group could therefore be said to be of the same ethnic stock, and their language would have a great deal in common. Beyond that, members of a tribe were seldom all members of the same political unit and very seldom indeed did they all share a common social purpose in terms of activities such as trade and warfare. Instead, African states were sometimes based entirely on part of the members of a given ethnic group or (more usually) on an amalgamation of members of different ethnic communities.

All of the large states of nineteenth-century Africa were multi-ethnic, and their expansion was continually making anything like "tribal" loyalty a thing of the past, by substituting in its place national and class ties. However, in all parts of the world, that substitution of national and class ties for purely ethnic ones is a lengthy historical process; and, invariably there remains for long periods certain regional pockets of individuals who have their own narrow, regional loyalties, springing from ties of kinship, language, and culture. In Asia, the feudal states of Vietnam and Burma both achieved a considerable degree of national homogeneity over the centuries before colonial rule. But there were pockets of "tribes" or "minorities" who remained outside the effective sphere of the nation-state and the national economy and culture.

In the first place, colonialism blocked the further evolution of national solidarity, because it destroyed the particular Asian or African states which were the principal agents for achieving the liquidation of fragmented loyalties. In the second place, because ethnic and regional loyalties which go under the name of "tribalism" could not be effectively resolved by the colonial state, they tended to fester and grow in unhealthy forms. Indeed, the colonial powers sometimes saw the value of stimulating the internal tribal jealousies so as to keep the colonized from dealing with their principal contradiction with the European overlords—i.e., the classic technique of divide and rule. Certainly, the Belgians consciously fostered that; and the racist whites in South Africa had by the 1950s worked out a careful plan to "develop" the oppressed African population as Zulu, as Xhosa, and as Sotho so that the march towards broader African national and class solidarities could be stopped and turned back.

The civil war in Nigeria is generally regarded as having been a tribal affair. To accept such a contention would mean extending the definition of

tribe to cover Shell Oil and Gulf Oil! But, quite apart from that, it must be pointed out that nowhere in the history of pre-colonial independent Nigeria can anyone point to the massacre of Ibos by Hausas or any incident which suggests that people up to the nineteenth century were fighting each other because of ethnic origin. Of course there were wars, but they had a rational basis in trade rivalry, religious contentions, and the clashes of political expansion. What came to be called tribalism at the beginning of the new epoch of political independence in Nigeria was itself a product of the way that people were brought together under colonialism so as to be exploited. It was a product of administrative devices, of entrenched regional separations, of differential access by particular ethnic groups into the colonial economy and culture.

Both Uganda and Kenya in East Africa are also situations in which a supposedly tribal factor continued to be pre-eminent. There is no doubt that the existence of the Buganda kingdom within independent Uganda posed certain problems. But, even after misapplying the definition of a tribe to the Baganda, it still remains true that the Buganda problem was a colonial problem. It was created by the presence of the missionaries and the British, by the British (Mailo) land settlement in Uganda in 1900, and by the use which Britain made of the Baganda ruling class as "sub-imperialists" within the colony of Uganda.

In Kenya, the pattern of colonialism was different from that in Uganda, because of the presence of white settlers. No African group was allowed any power in the capacity of NCOs for the Colonial Office, since the white settlers themselves filled the role. The white settlers took the best land and then tried to create a new world with African labor. However, the African community which lay outside the immediate white settler sector was regulated along tribal lines. One of the numerous Royal Commissions of British colonialism published a report on Kenya in 1934. A contemporary Kenyan historian commented on the report as follows:

The Commission's recommendations, which were accepted by the British government, implied that Kenya was to be partitioned into two racial blocks, African and European. And in the African sector, all economic, social and political developments were to be conducted on tribal lines. Racialism thus became institutionalised.

Human activity within small groups connected only by kinship relations (such as the tribe) is a very transient phase through which all continents passed in the phase of communalism. When it ceased to be transient and became institutionalized in Africa, that was because colonialism interrupted African development. That is what is implied in Memmi's reference to Africans being removed from history. Revolutionary African thinkers such

as Frantz Fanon and Amilcar Cabral expressed the same sentiments somewhat differently when they spoke of colonialism having made Africans into *objects of history*. Colonized Africans, like pre-colonial African chattel slaves, were pushed around into positions which suited European interests and which were damaging to the African continent and its peoples. In continuation, some further socio-economic implications of that situation will be examined.

Pre-colonial trade had started the trend of the disintegration of African economies and their technological impoverishment. Colonial rule speeded up that trend. The story is often told that in order to make a telephone call from Accra in the British colony of the Gold Coast to Abidjan in the adjacent French colony of Ivory Coast it was necessary to be connected first with an operator in London and then with an operator in Paris who could offer a line to Abidjan. That was one reflection of the fact that the Gold Coast economy was integrated into the British economy, and the Ivory Coast economy was integrated into the French economy, while the neighboring African colonies had little or no effective economic relations. The following conclusion reached by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa in 1959 goes directly to the point.

The most outstanding characteristic of the transportation systems of Africa is the comparative isolation in which they have developed within the confines of individual countries and territories. This is reflected in the lack of links between countries and territories within the same geographical sub-region.

Some African trade did persist across colonial boundaries. For instance, the centuries' old trade in kola nuts and gold from the forests of West Africa to North Africa never completely ceased. Besides, new forms of African trade developed, notably with regard to supplying foodstuffs to towns or cash-crop areas where there was insufficiency of food. That kind of trade could be entirely within a colony or it could cross colonial boundaries. However, the sum total of energy that went into expansion of inter-African trade was extremely small in comparison with trade that was export-oriented. Since this inter-African trade did not bring benefits to Europeans, it was not encouraged by them, and up to the latter part of the colonial period only 10 per cent of Africa's trade was internal.

It is also worth noting that Africa was denied the opportunity of developing healthy trade links with parts of the world other than Europe and North America. Some trade persisted across the Indian Ocean, but on the whole it is fair to say that the roads in Africa led to the seaports and the sea lanes led to Western Europe and North America. That kind of lopsidedness is today part of the pattern of underdevelopment and dependence.

The damaging impact of capitalism on African technology is even more clearly measurable in the colonial period than in the earlier centuries. In spite of the slave trade and of the import of European goods, most African handicraft industries still had vitality at the start of the colonial period. They had undergone no technological advance and they had not expanded, but they had survived. The mass production of the more recent phase of capitalism virtually obliterated African industries such as cloth, salt, soap, iron, and even pottery-making.

In North Africa, handicraft industries had made the greatest advances before colonialism, in spheres ranging from brasswork to woolens. As in the towns of feudal Europe, craft workshops flourished in Algerian towns like Oran, Constantine, Algiers, and Tlemcen. But French colonialism destroyed the handicraft industries and threw thousands out of work. The same thing had happened in Europe itself when new machines had thrown artisans out of employment in places like Lancashire and Lyons, but in that instance the new machines became the basis of the prevailing mode of production, and formerly independent artisans returned to factories as proletarians to master different skills and expand the productive capacity of their society. In Africa it was simply destruction without redress. By the time political independence was achieved, surviving craftsmanship had been turned towards attracting tourists rather than meeting the real needs of African people.

Besides, as was true of the European slave trade, the destruction of technology under colonialism must be related to the barriers raised in the path of African initiative. The vast majority of Africans drawn into the colonial money economy were simply providing manual labor, which stimulated perspiration rather than scientific initiative. Africans connected to the trading sector were sometimes successful in a limited way. The resourcefulness of West African market women is well known, but it was put to petty purposes. The problem posed to capitalists and workers in Europe while making insecticide from African pyrethrum was one requiring that resourcefulness be expressed in a technical direction. But the problem posed to an African market woman by the necessity to make a penny more profit on every tin of imported sardines was resolved sometimes by a little more vigor, sometimes by a touch of dishonesty, and sometimes by resort to "juju."

Colonialism induced the African ironworker to abandon the process of extracting iron from the soil and to concentrate instead on working scraps of metal imported from Europe. The only compensation for that interruption would have been the provision of modern techniques in the extraction and processing of iron. However, those techniques were debarred from

Africa, on the basis of the international division of labor under imperialism. As was seen earlier, the non-industrialization of Africa was not left to chance. It was deliberately enforced by stopping the transference to Africa of machinery and skills which would have given competition to European industry in that epoch.

In the period of African development preceding colonialism, some areas moved faster than others and provided the nuclei for growth on a wide regional basis. Northern Nigeria was one of those; and it virtually went to sleep during the colonial period. The British cut it off from the rest of the Moslem world and fossilized the social relations, so that the serfs could not achieve any change at the expense of the ruling aristocracy.

On every continent and within nation-states, some features of growth were always more outstanding than others, and thereby offered a lead to the rest of the society. The towns played that role in late feudal European society, while the electrical industry was an example of a similar impetus for development in metropolitan capitalist society in the first decades of this century. Colonialism provided Africa with no real growth points. For instance, a colonial town in Africa was essentially a center of administration rather than industry. Towns did attract large numbers of Africans, but only to offer them a very unstable life based on unskilled and irregular employment. European towns had slums, but the squalor of towns in underdeveloped countries is a special phenomenon. It was a consequence of the inability of those towns to play the role of expanding the productive base. Fortunately, Africa was never as badly off in this respect as Asia and Latin America.

Instead of speeding up growth, colonial activities such as mining and cash-crop farming speeded up the decay of "traditional" African life. In many parts of the continent, vital aspects of culture were adversely affected, nothing better was substituted, and only a lifeless shell was left. The capitalist forces behind colonialism were interested in little more than the exploitation of labor. Even areas that were not directly involved in the money economy exploited labor. In extracting that labor, they tampered with the factor that was the very buttress of the society, for African "traditional" life when deprived of its customary labor force and patterns of work was no longer "traditional."

During the colonial era, many thinly populated villages appeared in Central and Southern Africa, comprising women, children, and old men. They practiced subsistence agriculture which was not productive enough, and colonialists contrasted them with cash-crop areas, which in comparison were flourishing. However, it was precisely the impact of colonialism which left so many villages deserted and starving, because the able-bodied males

had gone off to labor elsewhere. Any district deprived of its effective laboring population could not be expected to develop.

There were several spots within different colonies which were sufficiently far removed from towns and colonial administration that they neither grew cash crops nor supplied labor. In southern Sudan, for instance, there were populations who continued to live a life not dissimilar to that which they had followed in previous centuries. Yet, even for such traditional African societies the scope for development no longer existed. They were isolated by the hold which the colonialists had on the rest of the continent. They could not interact with other parts of Africa. They were subject to increasing encroachment by the money economy and were more and more to be regarded as historical relics. The classic example of this type of obstructed historical development is to be found in the U.S.A., where the indigenous population of Indians who survived slaughter by the whites were placed in reservations and condemned to stagnation. Indian reservations in North America are living museums to be visited by white tourists who purchase curios.

In South Africa and Rhodesia, the policy of establishing "native reserves" was openly followed. Inside a reserve, the major means of production was the land. But the quantity and fertility of the land allocated was entirely inadequate to support the numbers of Africans who were driven in. The reserves were reservoirs of cheap labor, and dumping grounds for those who could not be accommodated within the money economy of the racist southern section of Africa. Further north, there were no areas named as "reserves" except in colonial Kenya and to a very limited extent in Tanganyika. But the money economy was constantly transforming the traditional sector into one which was just as deprived as any reserve.

The money economy of colonialism was a growing sector. That is not to be denied. However, it has already been indicated how limited that growth was, viewed over the continent as a whole. The growth in the so-called modern sector exercised adverse effects on the non-monetary sector. What remains is to emphasize that the character of growth in Africa under colonialism was such that it did not constitute development—i.e., it did not enlarge the capacity of the society to deal with the natural environment, to adjudicate relations between members of the society, and to protect the population from external forces. Such a statement is already implicitly borne out in the inability of capitalism to stimulate skilled labor in colonial Africa. A system which must stand in the way of the accumulation of skills does not develop anything or anybody. It is implicit, too, in the manner in which Africa was cut into economic compartments having

no relation one to another, so that, even though the volume of commercial activity within each compartmentalized colony may have increased, there was no development comparable to that which linked together the various states of the U.S.A.

In recent times, economists have been recognizing in colonial and post-colonial Africa a pattern that has been termed "growth without development." That phrase has now appeared as the title of books on Liberia and Ivory Coast. It means that goods and services of a certain type are on the increase. There may be more rubber and coffee exported, there may be more cars imported with the proceeds, and there may be more gasoline stations built to service the cars. But the profit goes abroad, and the economy becomes more and more a dependency of the metropolises. In no African colony was there economic integration, or any provision for making the economy self-sustained and geared to its own local goals. Therefore, there was growth of the so-called enclave import-export sector, but the only things which developed were dependency and underdevelopment.

A further revelation of growth without development under colonialism was the overdependence on one or two exports. The term "monoculture" is used to describe those colonial economies which were centered around a single crop. Liberia (in the agricultural sector) was a monoculture dependent on rubber, Gold Coast on cocoa, Dahomey and southeast Nigeria on palm produce, Sudan on cotton, Tanganyika on sisal, and Uganda on cotton. In Senegal and Gambia, groundnuts accounted for 85 to 90 per cent of money earnings. In effect, two African colonies were told to grow nothing but peanuts!

Every farming people have a staple food, plus a variety of other supplements. Historians, agronomists, and botanists have all contributed to showing the great variety of such foods within the pre-colonial African economy. There were numerous crops which were domesticated within the African continent, there were several wild food species (notably fruits), and Africans had shown no conservatism in adopting useful food plants of Asian or American origin. Diversified agriculture was within the African tradition. Monoculture was a colonialist invention.

Those who justify the colonial division of labor suggest that it was "natural" and respected the relative capacities for specialization of the metropolises and colonies. Europe, North America, and Japan were capable of specializing in industry and Africa in agriculture. Therefore, it was to the "comparative advantage" of one part of the world to manufacture machines while another part engaged in simple hoe-culture of the soil. That kind of arrogant partition of the world was not new. In the fifteenth

century, the feudal monarchies of Portugal and Spain wanted the whole world for themselves, and they got the Pope to draw a line around the globe, making the allocations. But Britain, Holland, and France suggested that they were not at all convinced that Adam had left a will which gave the earth to Portugal and Spain. In like manner, it can be questioned whether there is any testament which stated that the river Gambia should inherit groundnut growing while the river Clyde (of Scotland) should become a home of shipbuilding.

There was nothing "natural" about monoculture. It was a consequence of imperialist requirements and machinations, extending into areas that were politically independent in name. Monoculture was a characteristic of regions falling under imperialist domination. Certain countries in Latin America such as Costa Rica and Guatemala were forced by United States capitalist firms to concentrate so heavily on growing bananas that they were contemptuously known as "banana republics." In Africa, this concentration on one or two cash crops for sale abroad had many harmful effects. Sometimes, cash crops were grown to the exclusion of staple foods—thus causing famines. For instance, in Gambia rice farming was popular before the colonial era, but so much of the best land was transferred to groundnuts that rice had to be imported on a large scale to try to counter the fact that famine was becoming endemic. In Asante, concentration on cocoa raised fears of famine in a region previously famous for yams and other foodstuff.

Yet the threat of famine was a small disadvantage compared to the extreme vulnerability and insecurity of monoculture. When the crop was affected by internal factors such as disease, that amounted to an overwhelming disaster, as in the case of Gold Coast cocoa when it was hit by swollen-shoot disease in the 1940s. Besides, at all times, the price fluctuations (which were externally controlled) left the African producer helpless in the face of capitalist maneuvers.

From a capitalist viewpoint, monocultures commended themselves most because they made colonial economies entirely dependent on the metropolitan buyers of their produce. At the end of the European slave trade, only a minority of Africans were sufficiently committed to capitalist exchange and sufficiently dependent upon European imports to wish to continue the relationship with Europe at all costs. Colonialism increased the dependence of Africa on Europe in terms of the numbers of persons brought into the money economy and in terms of the number of aspects of socio-economic life in Africa which derived their existence from the connection with the metropole. The ridiculous situation arose by which European trading firms, mining companies, shipping lines, banks, insurance

houses, and plantations all exploited Africa and at the same time caused Africans to feel that without those capitalist services no money or European goods would be forthcoming, and therefore Africa was in debt to its exploiters!

The factor of dependency made its impact felt in every aspect of the life of the colonies, and it can be regarded as the crowning vice among the negative social, political, and economic consequences of colonialism in Africa, being primarily responsible for the *perpetuation* of the colonial relationship into the epoch that is called neo-colonialism.

Finally, attention must be drawn to one of the most important consequences of colonialism on African development, and that is the stunting effect on Africans as a physical species. Colonialism created conditions which led not just to periodic famine but to chronic undernourishment, malnutrition, and deterioration in the physique of the African people. If such a statement sounds wildly extravagant, it is only because bourgeois propaganda has conditioned even Africans to believe that malnutrition and starvation were the *natural* lot of Africans from time immemorial. A black child with a transparent rib cage, huge head, bloated stomach, protruding eyes, and twigs as arms and legs was the favorite poster of the large British charitable operation known as Oxfam. The poster represented a case of *kwashiorkor*—extreme malignant malnutrition. Oxfam called upon the people of Europe to save starving African and Asian children from *kwashiorkor* and such ills. Oxfam never bothered their consciences by telling them that capitalism and colonialism created the starvation, suffering, and misery of the child in the first place.

There is an excellent study of the phenomenon of hunger on a world scale by a Brazilian scientist, Josue de Castro. It incorporates considerable data on the food and health conditions among Africans in their independent pre-colonial state or in societies untouched by capitalist pressures; and it then makes comparisons with colonial conditions. The study convincingly indicates that African diet was previously more varied, being based on a more diversified agriculture than was possible under colonialism. In terms of specific nutritional deficiencies, those Africans who suffered most under colonialism were those who were brought most fully into the colonial economy: namely, the urban workers.

For the sake of the doubters, several of De Castro's observations are listed below (occasionally supplemented by other data).

- (1) Investigators who have studied the nutritional conditions of "primitive" Africans in tropical Africa are unanimous in stating that they show no clinical signs of dietary deficiency. One of the most striking indications of the superiority of indigenous African diet is the

magnificent condition of the teeth. One researcher among six ethnic groups in Kenya could not find a single case of tooth decay, not a single deformation of dental arch. But when those same people were transplanted and put on the "civilized" diet available under colonialism, their teeth began to decay at once.

- (2) In Egypt, the peasants, or fellahin, had always suffered from periodic famines, but under colonialism this deteriorated to become chronic hunger. It was the intervention of the British which upset the balance of the peasants' diet; and comparison with early accounts shows that there was once a much greater variety of legumes and fruits.
- (3) The *kwashiorkor* (of the Oxfam posters) is itself noticeable wherever the African's contact with the European was prolonged. A Committee on Nutrition in the Colonial Empire found a noticeable absence of animal fat and protein in the Gambia. The absence of proteins of good quality is one of the principal contributors to *kwashiorkor*; and once again comparison with what Europeans saw in the Gambia ever since the fifteenth century would indicate that a change had come about after the coming of the whites. The Gambia not only grew a variety of food in the early period, but it was stock-raising country where meat was consumed in considerable quantity. Throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, cattle hides were sold by the thousands to European buyers every year, and the local population ate the meat. How then could they have suffered from an absence of animal fat!
- (4) Studies in Equatorial Africa have revealed frequent signs of dietary deficiencies caused by the absence of fresh foods among Africans entering the service of the colonizers. These include beriberi, rickets, and scurvy. Rickets is a typical temperate climate disease, to which lack of sun contributes. But after colonialism had so destroyed the pattern of judicious food consumption in tropical Africa, even the sun was not enough to keep children's bones straight. As for scurvy, that is so closely identified with the English sailor that he was nicknamed "Limey," from eating limes to prevent scurvy while lacking access to fresh food on long sea voyages. However, a scurvy epidemic broke out in the middle of Tanganyika in the colonial epoch—among workers in the goldfields, whose wages and conditions of work did not permit them to get fresh citrus and other nourishment.
- (5) In South Africa, white settlement and capitalism transformed African diet from meat and cereal to dependence on mealy-meal

(maize). Pellagra, or "rough skin," was unknown in South Africa until about 1914. Subsequently, it became a scourge among Africans, because it derives from absence of milk and meat.

- (6) An official report on Basutoland (now Lesotho) had this to say: "According to residents of long standing, the physique and health of the Basuto today is not what it used to be. Malnutrition is seen in every village, dispensary, school and recruiting office. Mild scurvy and subscorbic conditions are not infrequent; pellagra is becoming more and more frequent and lower resistance to disease increasingly apparent. It is becoming generally accepted, too, that the occurrence of leprosy is associated with faulty diet."

To clinch the argument that colonialism had a deleterious effect on the African as a physical (and hence mental) entity, it is useful to point to those African peoples who until today have managed to maintain their own pattern of existence in so far as food is concerned. The pastoral Masai, Galla, Ankoli, Batutsi, and Somali are all in that category. Their physique is generally so superb, their resistance and endurance so great, that they have become the objects of scientific research to discover why they do so much better than the "well-fed" capitalists who are collapsing from heart disease.

In the light of the prevailing balance-sheet concept of what colonial rule was about, it still remains to take note of European innovations in Africa such as modern medicine, clinical surgery, and immunization. It would be absurd to deny that these were objectively positive features, however limited they were quantitatively. However, they have to be weighed against the numerous setbacks received by Africa in all spheres due to colonialism as well as against the contributions Africa made to Europe. European science met the needs of its own society, and particularly those of the bourgeoisie. The bourgeoisie did not suffer from hunger and starvation. Bourgeois science therefore did not consider those things as needs which had to be met and overcome—not even among their own workers and least of all on behalf of Africans. This is just a specific application of the general principle that the exploitation of Africa was being used to create a greater gap between Africa and capitalist Europe. The exploitation and the comparative disadvantage are the ingredients of underdevelopment.

Education for Underdevelopment

Education is crucial in any type of society for the preservation of the lives of its members and the maintenance of the social structure. Under certain

circumstances, education also promotes social change. The greater portion of that education is informal, being acquired by the young from the example and behavior of elders in the society. Under normal circumstances, education grows out of the environment; the learning process being directly related to the pattern of work in the society. Among the Bemba of what was then Northern Rhodesia, children by the age of six could name fifty to sixty species of tree plants without hesitation, but they knew very little about ornamental flowers. The explanation is simply that knowledge of the trees was a necessity in an environment of "cut and burn" agriculture and in a situation where numerous household needs were met by tree products. Flowers, however, were irrelevant to survival.

Indeed, the most crucial aspect of pre-colonial African education was its *relevance* to Africans, in sharp contrast with what was later introduced. The following features of indigenous African education can be considered outstanding: its close links with social life, both in a material and spiritual sense; its collective nature; its many-sidedness; and its progressive development in conformity with the successive stages of physical, emotional, and mental development of the child. There was no separation of education and productive activity or any division between manual and intellectual education. Altogether, through mainly informal means, pre-colonial African education matched the realities of pre-colonial African society and produced well-rounded personalities to fit into that society.

Some aspects of African education were formal: that is to say, there was a specific program and a conscious division between teachers and pupils. Formal education in pre-colonial Africa was also directly connected with the purposes of society, just like informal education. The programs of teaching were restricted to certain periods in the life of every individual, notably the period of initiation or "coming of age." Many African societies had circumcision ceremonies for males or for both sexes, and for some time before the ceremonies a teaching program was arranged. The length of time involved could vary from a few weeks to several years. A famous example of the latter was the initiation school held by the Poro brotherhood in Sierra Leone. Formal education was also available at later stages in life, such as on the occasion of passing from one age-grade to another or of joining a new brotherhood. Specialized functions such as hunting, organizing religious ritual, and the practice of medicine definitely involved formal education within the family or clan. Such educational practices all dated back to communal times in Africa, but they persisted in the more developed African feudal and pre-feudal societies, and they were to be found on the eve of colonialism.

As the mode of production moved towards feudalism in Africa, new